

School-Aged Children and Adults

Best Start for Kids Levy—
\$392 million
investment in promotion,
prevention, and early
interventions for
children, youth families,
and communities

257 homeless students
2016-2017

48 homeless students
2006-2007



95 first
languages spoken
in the district



62%
of BSD students
are **not white**

15%
8th graders



17%
10th graders



16%
12th graders



reported
contemplating
suicide

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In 2015, King County adopted the Youth Action Plan (YAP) to set countywide priorities for serving young people. The YAP is intended to guide and inform the County's annual investment of more than \$75 million in services and programs to ensure that all of King County's young people thrive.¹ In addition, in 2016 King County voters approved the **Best Start for Kids levy, a six-year, \$392 million investment in promotion, prevention and early intervention for children, youth, families and communities.**^{2,3} Bellevue values these priorities. Responding to the needs of and creating a strong foundation for healthy growth and development for all youth, especially those for whom there is limited access to resources they need to succeed, can improve the overall health of the community. This is critical as the economy continues to improve: research shows that children living in low-income families experience more negative life outcomes, such as poor health, impaired cognitive development, and lost economic potential.⁴

What's Working?

- Friends of Youth, along with Auburn Youth Resources and YouthCare run the Safe Place program supporting teens in crisis. Safe Place locations provide immediate help and safety for youth ages 11-17, connecting them with resources or emergency shelter.
- Eastside Pathways, a Bellevue based non-profit, is a community-wide partnership committed to the idea that collective action is needed to provide every child with a chance for success in school and in life. Some of the core indicators that will be tracked include academic and work success, in alignment with

Bellevue School District's (BSD) Instructional Initiatives, as well as those that help children get a healthy start, such as immunizations and quality childcare programs.

- Bellevue Youth Court, a year-round program in partnership with King County Superior Court and the King County Prosecutors Office, was created by the Youth Link Board. In 2015-2017, Bellevue Youth Court worked with 141 youths involved in the King County Juvenile Justice System; 74 cases were heard in Bellevue Youth Court, and 416 youth and 142 adults were trained and volunteered in the program.⁵
- The Best Start for Kids (BSK) Levy provided funds for a Children, Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Program in 2016. Flexible funds are given to families to prevent them from entering the homeless system, such as rent to prevent eviction and first and last month's rent to move into housing. One grant was awarded to Youth Eastside Services for families in East King County. Another BSK program funded in Bellevue is the School-Based Health Center at Highland Middle School through International Community Health Services beginning in fall 2017.⁶

Prevalence

Demographics

Youth age 18 and younger composed about 20% of Bellevue's population in 2015. Bellevue had a smaller proportion of school-age youth than did the nation (23%), state (22%) and county (21%), but a larger proportion than Seattle (15%).⁷

Education

- As of May 2016, BSD's enrollment was 20,177.⁸ In addition, approximately 1,733 Bellevue households have students that attend school in the Issaquah School District in 2016-2017 which had a total enrollment of 20,040 students as of July.⁹
- Funding for Head Start and the State Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) in King County is insufficient to meet the need for quality early learning for children from families with incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. In 2016 all 151 Head Start preschool slots in Bellevue were surprisingly eliminated, and the district cannot apply to replace those slots for 5 years. Funding was ultimately raised to replace slots for the 2016-2017 school year, but this was only a one-year solution.¹⁰ Bellevue SD has 149 ECEAP slots for the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, 39 preschoolers receive tuition-assistance through district, Bellevue Schools Foundation, City of Bellevue and state funds. 85 elementary school age children receive tuition-assistance to attend the district's before/after and summer ELP programs. Approximately 2000 spaces are available in the district's preschool and school age programs combined. Based upon the 2015-2016 Department of Early Learning ECEAP and Head Start Saturation study, there are an estimated 342 three and four year olds eligible for ECEAP, and the number of unserved, eligible students are 225. With the additional 59 ECEAP slots awarded to the district, this leaves 58 eligible and likely to attend students without access to comprehensive preschool services and programs.¹¹
- Research shows that school dropouts have a tougher time finding employment and earn significantly less than those students who finish high school and go on to at least some college. Other studies indicate that high

school dropouts are three and one-half times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested, and over eight times more likely to be in jail or in prison. Across the country, 68% of state prison inmates do not receive a high school diploma.¹²

- In 2016, BSD's 5-year adjusted graduation rate was 94.9, slightly higher than Lake Washington (93.4) and substantially higher than Seattle (81.1) school districts. Graduation rates substantially differ based on race and ethnicity. In BSD, the 5-year adjusted graduation rate for White students was 95.2, compared with 88.9 for Black students and 90.6 for Hispanic/Latino students.¹³

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

- Only 42% of youth age 18 and younger in Bellevue identify as white, compared to 78% of people 65 and over.¹⁴
- **BSD has become increasingly diverse over the past 20 years.** The percentage of Hispanic students (of any race) in BSD has steadily climbed over the years, growing from 5.3% in 1996-1997 to 12% in 2015-2016. Over that same period, the percentage of **White students has declined, shrinking from 71.4% in 1996 to just over 38% in 2015-2016.**¹⁵ See Figure 1. In addition, the Issaquah Schools Foundation, which matches mentors with elementary students, has seen a shift in several elementary schools to minority/majority schools.¹⁶
- **In addition to growing racial and ethnic diversity, there are now 95 first languages spoken in the district.** 35% percent of students speak a first language other than English. The top two languages are Spanish and Mandarin Chinese with over 1,200 speakers

each, followed by Korean, Russian, Telugu, Cantonese, and Japanese.¹⁷

- In 2016-2017, 14% of BSD students are English Language Learners (ELLs).¹⁸
- Some students who are Bellevue residents attend schools in the Issaquah School District: specifically Sunset and Cougar Ridge Elementary Schools and Issaquah Middle School. There are 280 Bellevue students attending Issaquah schools who are English Language Learners; of the 23 languages spoken by Bellevue students, the top languages are Chinese, both Mandarin and Cantonese (125), Korean (51), Japanese (26), and Russian (15).¹⁹

BSD Enrollment by Ethnic Group, 2016

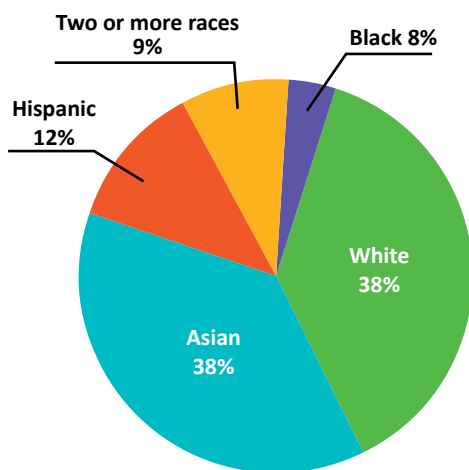


Figure 1. Source: Eastside Pathways (2016)

Children and Youth Living in Poverty

- Bellevue's youth poverty rate (under age 18) in 2015 was 8.7%, compared with 13.7% countywide. For children age 5 or under, the poverty rate slightly decreases to 8.7% in Bellevue but increases to 14.6% across the county.²⁰ Certain areas within Bellevue have historically had much higher rates of children in poverty than others. For instance, Lake Hills, Crossroads, and Downtown have the highest percentages of children living

in poverty in the city with upwards of 30 percent in some census tracts.²¹ See Figure 2.

- As Figure 3 shows, students of color are disproportionately represented in the free and reduced price lunch program.
- **BSD reports a large increase in students eligible to receive services funded by the federal McKinney-Vento Act because they are homeless. In 2006-2007 school year, 48 qualified; for the 2016-2017 school years, that number was 257.**

In the Issaquah School District, in 2010-2011, 135 students were enrolled; in 2016-2017 that number was 128.²²

Health and Mental Health Issues

- In 2011-2015, the rate of births per 1,000 women ages 15 through 19 living within BSD was estimated to be about 0.00 births per 1,000 women, which was much lower than the overall birth rate for women ages 15 through 19 living in King County of 13 births per 1,000 women.²³ One of the reasons this age group is tracked is because it is at the highest risk for poor birth outcomes, such as low birth weight and prematurity which puts the infant at risk for infant death, blindness and deafness. Children born to single teenage mothers are more likely to drop out of school, give birth out of wedlock, and become dependent on welfare, compared to children with older parents.²⁴

“Access to mental health services is needed. Kids are very stressed.”

— Youth Link Board Member

- Lack of exercise and being overweight are risk factors for serious illnesses such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes, and contribute to premature death. Factors contributing to the increasing rates of overweight children include fewer opportunities for physical activities, media and marketing, and increased time in sedentary activities, such as watching television or using computers.²⁵ In 2016, 24% of 8th graders, 19% of 10th graders, and 20% of 12th graders across King County were overweight or obese.²⁶

- The Healthy Youth Survey also provides information about substance use by youth. In 2016 in King County, 34% of 12th graders and 18% of 10th graders reported having drunk a glass, can or bottle of alcohol in the past 30 days. 37% of BSD 12th grade students and 16% of 10th grade students reported as such.²⁷ 25% of King County 12th graders and 14% of 10th graders reported smoking marijuana in the past 30 days. In BSD, 22% of 12th graders and 9% of 10th graders reported as such.²⁸

- Youth Eastside Services (YES) staff report an increase over the past five years in the number of young people coming into their offices with higher acuity than before: more substance abuse, anxiety, suicide ideation and depression.²⁹

% OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENT QUALIFYING FOR FREE/REDUCED LUNCH			
	Elementary	Middle	High
0-10%	Bennett, Cherry Crest, Clyde Hill, Medina, Puesta del SOL, Somerset, Spiritridge, Jing Mei	International	International
11-20%	Eastgate, Enatai, Newport Heights, Woodridge	Chinook, Big Picture, Tyee, Tillicum	Bellevue, Big Picture, Newport
21-30%		Odle	Interlake
31-40%	Phantom Lake		Sammamish
41-50%	Ardmore, Sherwood Forest, Stevenson	Highland	
51-70%	Lake Hills		
BSD (2016-2017)			

Figure 2. Source: Eastside Pathways (2017)

BSD Free/Reduced Lunch Enrollment by Ethnicity

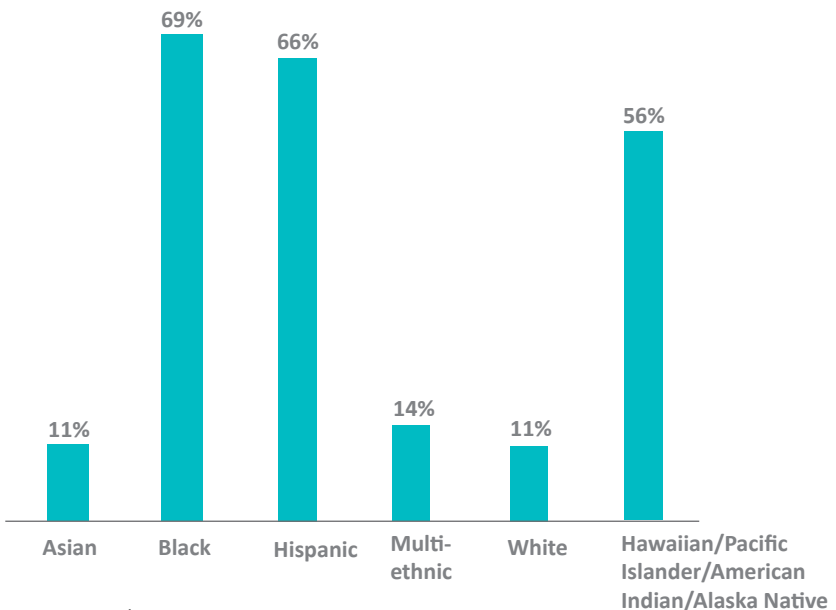


Figure 3. | Source: BSD, 2016-2017.

- The Healthy Youth Survey 2016 showed that 15% of 8th graders, 19% of 10th graders, and 18% of 12th graders in King County had **contemplated suicide in the last 12 months. In BSD, 15% of 8th graders, 17% of 10th graders and 16% of 12th graders** reported as such.³⁰

Youth Arrests and Violence

- There were 17,264 juvenile arrests in Washington State, an arrest rate of 24.5 per 1,000 youth age 10- 17 in 2013. This is the lowest juvenile arrest rate reported since prior to 1982. This is a 64 percent decrease from the 2000 rate, and approximately a 1.4 percent decrease from 2012 to 2013. Females accounted for 30.7 percent of all 2013 juvenile arrests. Ten years ago, females accounted for 28.9 of total juvenile arrests. The arrest rates for boys and girls has remained relatively the same since 2009. The percentage of juvenile arrests by race shows an increase of 10.7 percent in the overall percentage of total arrests for minority youth from 2012 to 2013.³¹
- Washington State data collected on youth in the juvenile justice system reveals that minority youth are disproportionately represented as they progress through the juvenile justice system. For example, while in 2013 Washington State's population of minority youth 10-17 years old made up 33.6% of the total youth population, they composed 56.8% of youth held in Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration facilities.³²
- In Bellevue in 2016, 150 juveniles were arrested.³³
- In 2016, while 84% of King County eighth graders feel safe at school, 27% of students report being bullied at school, the highest of all grades.³⁴ In Puget Sound Educational Service District (of which Bellevue is a part), 91% of sixth graders and 87% of twelfth graders felt safe at school, both similar to 2014.³⁵
- In 2016, 5% of King County 12th graders report having been a member of a gang in the past 12 months. Only 3% of BSD 12th graders reported as such.³⁶ Gang activity in Bellevue has declined greatly. In 2008, there was 11 gang related cases. In 2014-2016 there was no gang related cases. The Bellevue officers that do community outreach based out of Crossroads Police Substation report that agencies that have youth after-school and summer programs such as YES, Boys and Girls Clubs Teen Centers, YWCA, Jubilee REACH and Salvation Army are one of the reasons that there is not more gang activity in a growing city like Bellevue. Programs that work with youth from low-income families who may be "latch-key" kids because their families work several jobs to make ends meet are especially critical to help provide experiences such as mentoring, sports, school homework support and positive role models. Such programs give youth, especially those in middle school where often early gang involvement begins, alternatives that can be life changing. In BSD, they have added 2 additional School Resource Officers (SRO) for a total of 8 officers for the district. In the 2 middle schools, 4 officers are stationed there and the other 4 officers are stationed at the 4 high schools to provide support to youth in a more positive setting, and also redirect youth who need help in a more positive direction. BPD has one gang detective assigned to the Special Operations Group that works with the SROs and neighborhood station officers to identify crime related to gang activity and give them priority.³⁷

Service Trends

Support for Youth in the Community

- The VIBES (Volunteers in Bellevue's Education System) program works in all Bellevue schools to provide one-on-one mentoring and tutoring to students. They provide mentoring and tutoring in several areas, including after school learning, dual language programs, and elementary school robotics.³⁸
- The Wrap-Around Services Program, a collaborative partnership between the City of Bellevue, and BSD provides a number of activities for school-aged children and youth including before and after school programs and anti-bullying programs at two elementary and one middle school. In addition to youth focused goals, program staff help parents connect with resources, as well as build good relationships with the school and the community.³⁹
- Youth Eastside Services' (YES) SUCCESS Mentoring Program recruits mentors to encourage youth to develop the skills and qualities they need to be successful in life, help them build self-esteem and provide them with continual support and guidance.⁴⁰ Research shows that mentoring can decrease involvement in high-risk behavior. Many of the YES clients come from single-parent, female headed households, so a positive male role model who is a mentor is especially important.
- Bellevue Boys & Girls Club provides a *Project Learn* after school program. The program is designed to increase academic performance in reading, writing, and homework.⁴¹
- Teen Closet provides gently used and new clothing for homeless and low-income teens on the Eastside, to raise self-esteem and keep youth in school. Organized by a Youth Link action team, youth set up and pick up clothes from a primary sponsor, Plato's Closet. Distribution is in various locations, but the primary one is the Ground Zero "The Club" site with the Boys and Girls Club of Bellevue.⁴²
- Jubilee REACH, a family support center in the Lake Hills neighborhood, offers an extensive array of services for children and their families. Some services that specifically address the needs of school-aged children and youth include KidREACH tutoring, a music and recording studio, art club and studio, one-on-one GED teaching, as well as summer camps and after-school activities.⁴³
- Eastside Pathways' partners, along with BSD, have united to close the gap in reading ability among all children in Bellevue. Their first area of focus is the critical time from birth through third grade, which research has shown is crucial to life success. They have a goal of 100% of children reading at grade level by 2016 and beyond (the rate is 76% currently). They address this gap with strategies in school readiness, school attendance, and summer and extended learning.⁴⁴
- BSD created a Department of Equity which operates with the belief that, "An equitable and excellent school district is one which all students achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student's race, ethnicity, culture, country of origin, religion, gender, special needs, sexual orientation, neighborhood, income of parents, or native language. In an equitable and excellent school district, there are no persistent patterns of differences in the academic achievement or treatment of students grouped by race, ethnicity, culture, special needs, country of origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, neighborhood, income of parents or mother tongue. Equity and excellence occur when each and every student is served effectively to achieve high levels." The areas in which the department has goals include teaching and learning, student and family supports, and leadership and equity in the workplace.⁴⁵

“High school students need to take care of younger siblings after school and on weekends. Daycare is needed especially on weekends or else teens stay home babysitting and can’t work or do anything else.”

— Family Connections Center Staff

- Youth Eastside Services provides several programs for Latino youth and families. Safe Youth is a program to help Latino youth avoid violence, gangs and involvement with the criminal justice system through culturally sensitive mentoring and using violence prevention strategies. Latino H.E.A.T. is a student leadership, community service and cultural empowerment group. Mamas Unidas offers workshops, support, community information, resource sharing and involvement to empower Latino mothers to be leaders and mentors in the community.⁴⁶

Health and Mental Health Issues

- YES has a variety of Early Intervention Programs for individuals, families or groups in all three departments – Youth and Family Counseling, Substance Abuse and Education & Prevention. They see clients with a wide range of problems including those who have experienced trauma and abuse, and also many people with such challenges as: family communication, parenting skills, peer and social problems, or needing skills to cope with anxiety, depression and anger. Common issues youth are presenting with include: anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, self-injuring behavior, anger management problems, academic challenges, social problems and bullying, divorce, behavior problems, family conflict, parents with addiction issues, and exposure to domestic/family violence.⁴⁷
- YES has seen an increase in youth with both substance abuse and mental health issues-co-occurring disorders. The issues related to substance abuse include an increase in client deaths due to overdose, lack of beds available when a youth is ready for treatment, no medication assisted treatment for youth funded by Medicaid, and lack of detox facilities for youth.⁴⁸
- Bullying has been defined as physical or psychological aggression that is intended to harm or disturb, occurs repeatedly, and has a powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one. In 2002, Washington State passed an Anti-Bullying Law that requires schools have a policy in place, notify staff and students of the policy, and that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction must establish policies, training and resources.⁴⁹ The academic consequences of bullying are severe, as are the mental and physical well-being of targeted students and bystanders. School-wide anti-bullying projects, involving parents and non-teaching staff along with teachers and student leaders have been shown to reduce harassment by as much as fifty percent.⁵⁰ 25% of sixth graders in Washington State reported in the 2016 HYS that they’d been bullied in the past 30 days. By twelfth grade, this rate had dropped to 16%.⁵¹
- The Crisis Clinic’s Teen Link provides a youth-answered help line open evenings to respond to calls from youth on a wide variety of topics. Teen Link is a teen peer-to-peer support line that offers support through anonymous and confidential telephone call and on-line chat. In the first two quarters of 2017, Teen Link handled 1,879 calls. Teen Link also offers suicide prevention training in junior, middle and high schools, and

youth serving organizations. In the first two quarters of 2017, Teen Link presented in 19 different schools and reached 4,683 teens.⁵²

- In 2016 Eastside Pathways created a new collaborative, Mental Health and Well-Being, bringing together over 20 members to support prevention and intervention for all Eastside children and youth by connecting resources and services. One of its goals is to help create a more coordinated system in which children and youth experiencing mental health issues and their families can more easily get the help they need.⁵³

Refugee and Immigrant Youth

Disparities in student academic achievement, called the “achievement gap”, mean that students of color and students in poverty have fewer opportunities to access academic programs and supports, and therefore have less success in school. For example, eighth grade math test scores in Washington clearly show that Asian and White students consistently do better than Black, American Indian, and Hispanic students. To address this issue, in 2008, the Washington State Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee was created, developing recommendations and providing training and community education. The 2017 recommendations included decreasing the disproportionate number of students of color in disciplinary actions, enhance school cultural competence, enhance English Language Learner programs, and invest in recruitment and retention of educators of color.⁵⁴ (Note: for more information about this issue, see Refugee and Immigrant section of this report.)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth

B-GLAD, sponsored by Youth Eastside Services (YES), is a drop-in support group open to kids ages 13 to 19 who may identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender or who may be questioning their sexuality. Co-facilitated by trained professionals, B-GLAD is a safe environment for youth to meet their peers, share common concerns, ask questions, and receive information and support in a professional setting that encourages responsible decision-making.⁵⁵

Emergency Shelter, Transitional and Long-Term Permanent Housing Options for Homeless Youth

- In 2016-2017, BSD reported 257 homeless students.⁵⁶
- Friends of Youth (FOY) provides a shelter for young adults age 18-24 years old in Redmond seven days a week. FOY staff provides case management and work to engage participants in services such as housing, employment, education and mental health.

For more information about this topic, see Focus Area in this report.

- The Homeless Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Initiative is King County’s community-wide response to prevent and end homelessness among young people. The Initiative is led by All Home, formerly called the King County Committee to End Homelessness, advised by agency and government leaders, supported by private philanthropy and the public sector, and grounded in the

voices and input of homeless and formerly homeless young people.⁵⁷

- King County's identified strategies to address youth homelessness include (1) making homelessness rare and brief, (2) making homelessness one-time, (3) supporting YYA of color, (4) supporting LGBTQ YYA and (5) improving access to housing and matching housing with YYA needs.⁵⁸
- For the second consecutive year, 824 homeless or unstably housed young people ages 12 to 25 were identified during Count Us In—All Home's annual youth-specific point-in-time (PIT) count. This number includes 131 young people who were unsheltered at the time of the count on January 27, 2017 compared to 133 last year. The fact that the total number of homeless or unstably housed young people did not increase during the past year, a time of great challenges related to homelessness in our community, is notable.⁵⁹
- In January 2017 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the Seattle-King County Continuum of Care \$5.4 million for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. These funds will support a wide range of housing programs to help prevent youth homelessness. An extensive planning process is underway to identify key programs through a joint decision making body from the Children's Administration, All Home, and a Youth Advisory Board.⁶⁰

Youth Violence

- Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) provide a youth prevention and early intervention program, as well as a skills group for young women. The Teen Peer Advocate Program (TPAP) trains and recruits girls from Interlake and Sammamish High Schools to educate their peers and the broader community on teen dating violence, sexual assault prevention and community resources.

This program addresses the need for a culturally relevant program for Asian Pacific American young women but all races are welcome to join.⁶¹

- Human trafficking, which includes labor and sex trafficking, is a modern-day form of slavery. Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders and include women, men and children. Children and youth under the age of eighteen can be part of forced sex trafficking which subjects them to physical and psychological abuse, such as severe beatings, rape, drug addiction and other forms of violence.⁶² In Washington State, one of the top human trafficking destinations in the U.S., the Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN) provides a 24-hour urgent response hotline, access to safe housing and immigration advocacy and legal assistance.⁶³
- The Bellevue Police Department is represented on the FBI sponsored Children's Exploitation Task Force (CETF) with two full-time VICE Detectives and their Supervisor. CETF is tasked with locating and recovering juvenile victims of commercial sex exploitation. This task involves networking with Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies in an effort to provide comprehensive intervention to the victims they locate and recover. The involvement of non-governmental organizations is vital to this process in providing tools and services that there is no funding for. These may include but is not limited to: hotel vouchers for short-term stays, clothing items such as sandals, sweatshirts and pants, undergarments and small duffle bags; travel sized-toiletries; gift cards for items such as gas, food and the telephones and/ or minutes to load their phones.⁶⁴

Community Perceptions

- Slightly more people (23%) in the 2017 phone/online survey ranked “lack of services for children and youth/teens” as a major/moderate community problem compared to 20% in 2015.
- Members of the Bellevue Youth Link Board identified the need for increasing the awareness in the community of all substance abuse including use of marijuana and vaping not just heroin use because it has been called an epidemic.
- Grandparents raising their grandchildren who participate in a Kinship Support Group identified the need for more respite hours, more assistance with legal issues such as custody, and better access to mental health counseling, low cost after-school care and scholarships for day camp and parks activities.
- Participants on a panel on LGBTQ issues and trends identified the need for more groups and mentors for LGBTQ youth and young adults to help support them in dealing with bullying and other discrimination. There is also a need for more access to mental health services since risk for suicide is four times greater for LGBTQ youth than their straight peers.
- In the Next Door survey, 20% of respondents rated lack of services for children and youth a major or moderate problem in the community.

Implications for Action

- Access to supports for school-aged children and youth to ensure their health and well-being is critical so that they are prepared for success in whatever they do in life. Though the unemployment rate is down, many families still struggle to provide the basics for their children. Lack of resources can put children and youth at risk for poor outcomes, and eventually take an economic toll on the community. Efforts such as Eastside

Pathways provide an important framework by which to “mobilize the community to support every child, step by step, from cradle to career”.⁶⁵

- With the growing diversity in Bellevue, there is a need for more culturally responsive programs and activities for school-aged children and youth and their families who may be coping with adjusting to a new country and culture or to gender-based or physical differences. Involving the families is needed to ensure school success.
- Many children are showing signs of significant stress: problems in school, substance abuse, anxiety, suicide ideation and depression, as evidenced by comments from school staff, parents and mental health professionals. Evidence based and promising prevention oriented services, including those that promote health, and focus on trauma-informed care including physical activities and mentoring, are needed to help avoid more serious problems later.
- There continues to be a gap in the “safety net” for homeless youth and young adults up to age 24. More housing with services and outreach to this population is needed to help them move on to successful lives. Some have “aged out” of the foster care system; others are employed or going to school, but lack family or community support.

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